How to / Trackmania / Trackmaking / Editor & Workflow

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Introduction

Creating your own driving tracks is one of the biggest strengths of the Trackmania games series.

Thousands of authors have created and uploaded their tracks to the game before, so peoples' demands on new tracks are very high... that's your "entry level" for releasing your own tracks to other people, so you need some good understanding of how trackmaking works...

The more you know about the craftsmanship, the earlier your tracks will be ready for a public release.
For some trackmaking inspiration, read the tutorial about good trackmaking style.

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Quick reference guide

In case you need a quick look at all the basic functions of the track editor, you can always come back here and watch the quick reference guide.

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Step 0: Get into the Editor

From the main menu, the driving track editor is only a few clicks away... let's build a new track.

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Click the "Editors" button in your main menu. One of the available editors is for driving tracks.

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Click "New Track", "Advanced".. Don't waste your time with the simple editor, it's too limited.

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Select your desired environment in which you want to build. Our exercises will be done in the Stadium.

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Select the daytime.
(Installed Environment mods will popup after this)

Changing Daytime / Mood / Environment Mod for an existing track

When loading an existing track, you can **press+hold the CTRL key before clicking on the track's name** in the file listing. Doing this, will make a menu popup, which offers you to change the daytime or to load an environment modification installed on your harddisk.

Step 1 : Moving around in the environment

First of all, we need to learn how to move around in the editing environment.

Navigation can be either done with clicking buttons (see picture), or with keyboard strokes.

Track blocks will always be inserted at your cursor's actual position, so I highly recommend learning all the (few required) keystrokes and mouse movement combinations, because you will develop a much better workflow later on.

Moving the cursor box

The transparent **cursor box follows your mouse pointer** (or arrow keys). Move your mouse over the screen and you will see how the cursor box follows your mouse.

When moving the mouse pointer to the **edges of the screen**, your viewing area will be moved correspondingly.
Your mouse's **scrolling wheel** (or page up/down keys) is responsible moving the cursor upwards/downwards.

Nevertheless, this is a very limited view of your editing area, so we need some more freedom.

Freelook mode

When additionally pressing the **left ALT key**, you get into the freelook mode, which enables you to move around the environment very quickly,change view angles, zooming etc.pp
Pressing ALT + Left Mouse Button drags your viewing area away from the screen center very quickly.
Pressing ALT + Right Mouse Button rotates and highers/lowers the camera around the center of the screen. Very useful to get different impressions of your viewing area.
Pressing ALT + Mouse Wheel will zoom the center of the screen in and out.

General orientation is very important when editing tracks, so practice these moving methods whenever you can.

Step 2 : Selecting, placing and connecting blocks

Creating tracks is all about placing and connecting blocks. Your editing area is usually between 32*32*32 and 45*45*45 blocks large (width,depth and height)...

Selecting blocks

At the lower screen menu, you will find several buttons with pictures of blocks, which you can place in the editing area...

You can either select them with clicking the buttons, or you can (should!) use the number keys on your keyboard to make quick selections of the blocks...

Use your left hand to select the blocks (represented by the number on their little thumbnail). To go up one level in the hierarchy, use the key left of the "1"...

With **CTRL + Left mouse click** on an existing block, you automatically chose the clicked block at the same height as the clicked one.

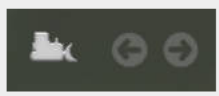
On the lower right screen you will always see a rotating preview of the block you selected.

Placing blocks, underground and deletion

We select a simple road part (2/1/1) and put some single pieces of them onto the grass with a **Left mouse button** click (or Space key).

Rotate selected blocks with Right Mouse Button before placing them.

This button activates the "**underground**" mode, in which you can place a limited group of blocks (such as tunnels) below the ground surface. This mode is only available in TMU environments.



When the excavator icon on the left is activated, **all parts can be deleted just by clicking them with left mouse button**, without going to their exact X/Y/Z position with the cursor.

Press the icon again to deactive the **deletion mode**. The arrows on the right side are **undo / redo** functions.

Connecting blocks

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Lots of blocks can be connected or merged with each other...

Select a block, click on the desired location where you want to place it and **keep holding the left mousebutton** and drag it to the other part which shall get connected to it.

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Which block can be connected ???

In case of flat road parts this is very easy to answer, because regular roadparts have **coloured endpieces**, from which you can see, what they can be connected with...

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There are many more possible combinations between (road and) non-road blocks, so only lots of testing will give you the necessary experience on this matter.

If parts cannot be connected, the editor won't let you click+drag to make a connection between both blocks.

Manipulating the ground surface

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You can edit the environment's ground, the available ground blocks are found in block subcategory "1".

Placing and connecting ground blocks works the same way as for other blocks.

If the bottom basis is large enough, some **ground blocks can be piled up on top of each other**. For this, you need to create a large ground area of one type, then go up 1 height step and place the same ground block type there.

Special blocks and connections

Not all blocks can be used at any location on the map.
Some parts can only be built in the air, others need a particular ground type to be built on and even others can only be placed as a replacement for an already existing block. Usually, the form of the block tells you, which basis/underground is needed.

A list of special blocks and placement methods is available here.

Here are 2 examples:

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Mud Blocks 7/4/4 and 7/4/5, connected to each other.

Before you are allowed to place these blocks, you must pile up a mud hill, so you can lay the blocks into the edges of the upgoing mud hill...

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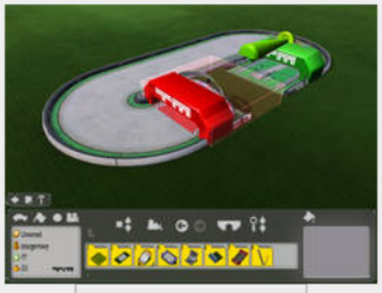
The huge advertisement sign block 8/8/7 can only "**replace a classic block**", in this case the sidewall of an inflatable.

Start and Finish

Of course every track needs at least a start and a finish to be driven.



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The most simple example would be a track with 1 start and 1 finish...

Any driver will just need to drive from start to finish , online and offline.

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As soon as you use a **Multilap-Start/Finish** , some special rules apply:

First of all, you must insert at least 1 additional checkpoint.

An additional red finish line would behave just like the green multilap start-finish.

Offline, you can enter a number of laps to be driven in the "*access objectives*" menu. Any driver must drive these many laps to "finish" the track.

Online in Rounds mode, it's the same as offline.

Online in Time Attack mode, each time a driver passes the green start/finish line (or an additional red finish line), the track is considered "finished" and the time starts from 0:00 again immediately, no matter how many laps were driven. People can drive as many laps as they want to improve their best personal lap time.

Attention !

Often enough, track authors use multilap start blocks for style reasons, for example when a driver is supposed to pass the start block twice during a race, but is then supposed to drive through a "real" red finish line somewhere else to finish the track...

This can lead to a special situation, where a driver could stop right before the "final" red finish line, quickly return to the multilap start and make a "**flying start**" into a brand new 2nd lap there, resulting in a much better race time in the end. This would ruin the track's driving experience completely.

Placing checkpoints

Any driver must pass all checkpoints between start and finish, therefor "CPs" serve 3 purposes:

Give drivers **feedback on their time** (and improvements) on different crucial sections of a driving track.

Stop drivers from looking for **"illegal" shortcuts** (not driving the track as it was meant to be, because you forgot to place enough CPs at the track).

Give people the ability to "**respawn**" at the last checkpoint they passed, instead of restarting the whole race from scratch.

Serving all these 3 purposes when placing checkpoint blocks can be quite a challenge sometimes! Badly placed (or missing) CPs can also ruin a track's driving experience.

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